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Illinois
Environmental
Protection Agency

2200 Churchill Road
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276

Earth Day, Every Day

May 1996

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A New Era Of Clean Air Is Dawning...

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THE ILLINOIS VEHICLE EMISSIONS TEST PROGRAM

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LOOKING AHEAD

In the future, when your car is due for emissions testing, the test procedure will have changed significantly. The new test procedure, called IM240, with gas cap pressure check, will be much more efficient in measuring targeted pollutants emitted from vehicles.

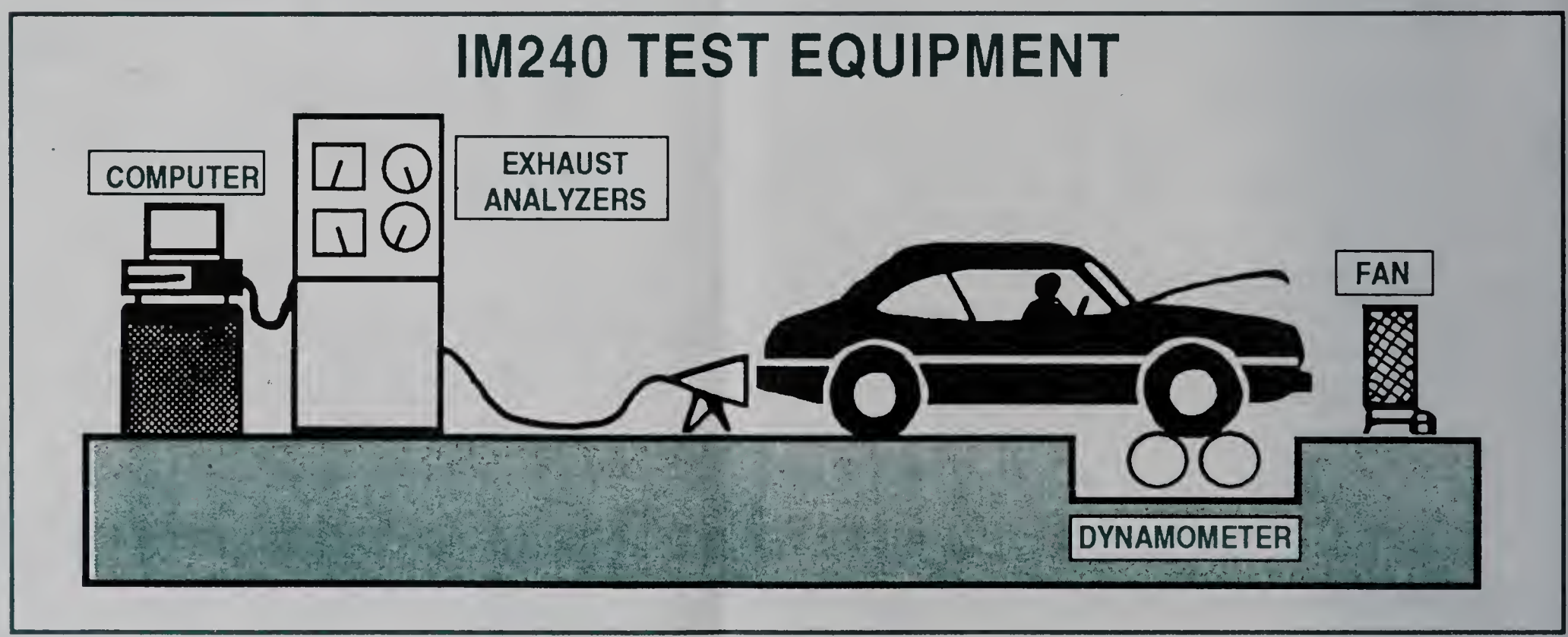
The Federal Clean Air Act requires that testing technology for vehicle emissions be upgraded to do a better job of identifying gross-emitting vehicles in the Chicago and East St. Louis metropolitan areas. Air quality in those two regions, with their high concentrations of vehicles, is significantly below accepted standards and poses certain health threats.

As is currently the case, other areas of the state will not be subject to the enhanced testing program because the air quality standards there are being met.

Exhaust emissions from gasoline-powered motor vehicles contain pollutants, including hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides, that form smog.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The new test will be very effective at identifying high-polluting vehicles and indicating which vehicles need appropriate repairs. When you comply with the new rules and test procedures, you are playing a major role in the fight against air pollution.



- *Vehicle license plate number is entered into computer.*
- *Motorist exits vehicle and views test from an observation area.*
- *Test inspector "drives" vehicle; exhaust is captured and tested during typical driving cycle.*
- *Gas cap is removed from vehicle, pressurized and checked for leaks.*
- *Test results, diagnostic and other appropriate information is given to motorist.*

Through this enhanced testing program, motor vehicle hydrocarbon emissions are expected to be cut 32 percent by the year 2000.

THE NEW TEST

The new test will be much more sophisticated, requiring larger test stations and more complex test equipment.

Most 1981 model year and newer vehicles will be tested by "driving" them on a device called a dynamometer during the IM240 test procedure. The "dyno" simulates driving conditions at various speeds so the vehicle is actually tested with the engine under "load," as opposed to the current idle test. The vehicle's exhaust is captured, and its emission contents are detected, identified and measured at various acceleration and deceleration points. The test is named for its 240-second test cycle.

The vehicle's fuel-system integrity will also be checked by testing the gas cap. The gas cap is a primary source of evaporative emission leaks from the fuel system, which is designed to be a closed loop to ensure that harmful vapors are recirculated for combustion.

Under the new testing program, cars will be tested every other year, beginning when the car is two model-years old. (For example, if you have a 1994 car, it should be tested in 1996, 1998, 2000, etc.)

The new law requires that the areas of the state subjected to vehicle testing be expanded.

New areas that will be included are those with the following zip codes:

Chicago Area: 60002, 60012, 60013, 60014, 60020, 60021, 60039, 60041, 60042, 60050, 60051, 60080, 60081, 60102, 60118, 60136, 60417, 60423, 60449, 60451, 60538, 60543;

Metro-East Area: 62025, 62026, 62034, 62035, 62062, 62208, 62220, 62221, 62222, 62223, 62225, 62232, 62234, 62236, 62269, 62294.

Additional testing stations will be built in the greater Chicago area and in the greater East St. Louis area due to the increased number of vehicles to be tested and the additional time required to perform the test.

WHAT IF MY CAR FAILS?

It is anticipated that more vehicles will fail the new test. However, proper routine maintenance, such as complete tune-ups and emissions systems checks, will help most vehicles pass the test.

If a vehicle continues to fail the emission test after being repaired by a qualified repair technician (*a professional auto repair person*), it may qualify for a waiver. Most vehicles should pass the retest after repairs have been made.

Under federal law, waivers can be considered only if:

- All the original emissions-related components are present and properly connected.
- All emissions-related manufacturer recalls have been completed.
- At least $450 has been spent on emissions-related repairs that results in an improvement in test results.

While the $450 minimum waiver expenditure may concern many vehicle owners, it is important to remember that the average vehicle that fails the initial test will **NOT** require $450 worth of repairs. It is estimated that the average repair cost will be about $150, roughly the cost of an emissions-related tune-up.

IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS...

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